



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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Commercial Harvest of Snowy Grouper and Vermilion Snapper Will Close on September 22, 2015 in South Atlantic Waters

Commercial harvest of snowy grouper and vermilion snapper in South Atlantic waters will **close, at 12:01 a.m. (local time) on September 22, 2015.**

Snowy Grouper

The commercial sector of snowy grouper was closed on June 30, 2015, because the catch limit was met. On August 20, 2015, the final rule for Regulatory Amendment 20 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region increased the catch limit to 115,451 pounds gutted weight. Reports indicate the revised catch limit will be met by September 22, 2015. Commercial harvest will reopen at 12:01 a.m. (local time) on January 1, 2016.

Vermilion Snapper

The 2015 July-December commercial catch limit of vermilion snapper is 438,260 pounds whole weight. Reports indicate the catch limit will be met by September 22, 2015. Commercial harvest will reopen at 12:01 a.m. (local time) on January 1, 2016.

The operator of a vessel with a federal commercial permit for snapper-grouper that is landing snowy grouper or vermilion snapper for sale must have landed and bartered, traded, or sold such snowy

grouper and vermilion snapper prior to 12:01 a.m. (local time), September 22, 2015. The prohibition on sale does not apply to sale or purchase of snowy grouper or vermilion snapper that were harvested, landed ashore, and sold prior to 12:01 a.m. (local time), September 22, 2015, and held in cold storage by a dealer or processor.

During the closure:

- Harvest or possession of snowy grouper or vermilion snapper is limited to the recreational bag and possession limits.
- Sale or purchase of snowy grouper or vermilion snapper is prohibited.
- The prohibition on sale or purchase does not apply to the sale or purchase of snowy grouper or vermilion snapper that were harvested, landed ashore, and sold prior to 12:01 a.m., local time, September 22, 2015, and were held in cold storage by a dealer or processor.
- The closure applies in both state and federal waters for a vessel with a federal commercial permit for snapper-grouper.

These closures are necessary to protect the snapper-grouper fishery.